

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 05062 191656Z
ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7962

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 05062

STADIS (UPGRADED PER MR. WHITING, ARA/PAN)//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, EWWT, US, PN
SUBJECT: PANAMA CANAL TREATY IMPLEMENTATION

REF: A. PANAMA 4688 B. STATE 176683

1. I APPRECIATE THE CONSIDERATION WHICH YOU HAVE GIVEN TO MY PREVIOUS CABLE (REF A). I SUSPECT THAT WE ARE NOT AS FAR APART AS MAY APPEAR AT FIRST GLANCE. I CERTAINLY APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN AMBASSADORIAL AUTHORITY, AND I BELIEVE WE ARE IN FUNDAMENTAL AGREEMENT ON THE ROLE WHICH THE EMBASSY AND THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD PLAY IN IMPLEMENTATION. AS FOR THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, I FULLY AGREE THAT IT WILL BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE TREATY STRUCTURE. IT WILL BE A FORUM IN WHICH STATE SHOULD HAVE A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY.

2. ESSENTIALLY, I THINK, MY PROBLEM WITH YOUR ORIGINAL PROPOSAL HAS TO DO WITH TIMING. THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT--WRAPPED UP IN AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND A HOST OF OTHER POLITICAL PROBLEMS--IS ONLY SLOWLY DEVELOPING ITS OWN PLANNING, AND INTERNAL U.S. GOVERNMENT COORDINATION ON THE ISTHMUS IS ONLY BEGINNING TO TAKE SHAPE. (THE NEWLY CREATED PRC SUBCOMMITTEE SHOULD BE A HELP.) U.S.-
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PANAMANIAN EXCHANGES ARE AT BEST INCIPIENT. WHAT WE WANT TO ESTABLISH HERE IS A CLEAR PERCEPTION ON THE PART OF PANAMANIAN THAT (1) THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SPEAKS WITH ONE VOICE IN PANAMA, AND (2) PROBLEMS SHOULD BE RESOLVED ON THE ISTHMUS. WE WOULD LIKE FOR PANAMA TO SEEK MIGHTILY TO WORK OUT ITS PROBLEMS WITHIN THE MECHANISMS ESTABLISHED IN THE TREATY. WHEN THAT FAILS, WE WANT THEM TO BE AWARE

THAT THE PRC, CHAIRED BY THE AMBASSADOR, IS THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY ON THE ISTHMUS ON U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY QUESTIONS, AND THAT THE AMBASSADOR IS AVAILABLE FOR WORKING OUT SUCH PROBLEMS AS MIGHT NOT BE RESOLVABLE WITHIN TREATY MECHANISMS.

3. PANAMANIAN DO NOT YET HAVE THE PERCEPTIONS WE WISH THEM TO DEVELOP. WE SHOULD ALLOW THE MECHANISMS WHICH ARE NOW BEGINNING TO FUNCTION ON THE ISTHMUS TO MATURE BEFORE WE INTRODUCE A NEW ELEMENT OF "THE RIGHT OF APPEAL" TO WASHINGTON--WHICH IS SURE TO RESULT FROM TOO HIGH A WASHINGTON PROFILE. LET'S SEE WHAT PROBLEMS THE NEW MACHINERY PRODUCES AND HOW IT WILL HANDLE THEM BEFORE WE CREATE YET ANOTHER PIECE OF MACHINERY. OTHERWISE, WHAT SHOULD BE A BODY FOR POLICY DELIBERATION AND A COURT OF APPEALS WILL FIND ITSELF HANDLING POLICE-COURT PROBLEMS WHICH SHOULD NOT COME BEFORE IT.

4. FOR THESE REASONS, I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WHICH YOU HAVE PROPOSED IS PREMATURE. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT A VISIT BY AMBASSADOR POPPER IN THE NEAR FUTURE--UNLESS FOR SOME MISSION OF OBVIOUS IMPORTANCE--WOULD NOT BE ADVISABLE. JORDEN

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